

Kheng language

The **Khengkha language** (Dzongkha གཞེང་ཁ) , or **Kheng**,^[2] is an East Bodish language spoken by ~40,000 native speakers worldwide,^[3] in the Zhemgang, Trongsa, and Mongar districts of south-central Bhutan.^[4]

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Kheng	
କ୍ଷେଣ୍ଗ ଭାଷା	
Native to	Bhutan
Ethnicity	Kheng
Native speakers	50,000 (2013) Total speakers: 65,000
Language family	<p>Sino-Tibetan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tibeto-Kanauri ? ▪ Bodish ▪ East Bodish ▪ Kheng
Writing system	Tibetan alphabet
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	xkf
Glottolog	khen1241 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/kuoid/id/khen1241) ^[1]

Classification

Khengkha is a dialect found in the small Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan. Khengkha is part of the larger branch of Sino-Tibetan language family but falls into the subcategories of: Tibeto-Burman, Western Tubeto-Burman, Bodish, East Bodish, Bumthang, and Khengkha.

Language codes

ISO 639-3 xkf

Glotolog khen1241^[5]

Geographical distribution

Khengkha is an East Bodish language spoken in the south-central districts of Bhutan. Khengkha is mainly found in the Sarpang district but can also be found in southwest Mongar district, rural areas in southeast Trongsa district and in Zhemgang district.^[2]

Dialects

The three main dialects in Bumthang district are Bumthap (Lower Kheng), Khempa (Middle Kheng), and Kurtop (Upper Kheng). Comprehension between the three dialects differs as Bumthap is the most similarly related language, however conversation with Kurthop is difficult.

Grammar

In most Khengkha sentences, it only marks grammatical relations through word order. The subject constituent precedes the object and the verb constituents follow it. Khengkha follows the same typology as Dzongkha. The example below demonstrates how the grammatical roles of each constituent are marked only by the position relative to the verb:^[2]

My name Dorji is.

Ngai meng Dorji wenn.

S O V

When nouns are addressed in Khengkha there are two ways it can be written, depending on the other.

1. Relatives before noun heads or articles.
2. Adjectives after noun heads.

Khengkha is an oral language without a writing system, making tones and nuances important during communication.^[2]

Language Use

Khengkha is a vigorous language in limited areas. Khengkha is not allowed to be taught in schools around Bhutan, making it only spoken at home, for commerce, local politics, and traditional religion. Due to the increasing modernization of Bhutan, there are negative attitudes towards those who speak Kheng instead of Dzongkha or the English. Lower Kheng is considered to be spoken backward, while Middle Kheng is seen as more prestigious. Middle Kheng region is the strongest and most developed economically, while lower Kheng is least developed.^[2]

Language Development

Since Khengkha is an oral language there is a low literacy rate for native Khengkha speakers in Dzongkha. There is literacy rate of 20% in Dzongkha.^[2]

Common Phrases

As there is no official English romanization of Dzongkha script, many words are spelled out phonetically. Therefore, there may be multiple spellings of the same word.

English	Khengkha	Dzongkha
Hello	Kuzu zangpo	Kuzu zangpo
How are you?	Wed ato nag yo?	Choe gadey be yoe?
My name is Dorji.	Ngai meng Dorji wenn	Ngegi ming Dorji 'ing.
It was nice meeting you.	Nga wed domsay nyeng gas a.	Chö dang je di sem ga-i.
Okay, I will see you again.	Kai nyeng dom.	Yaya, lok shu ley jel gey.
Sorry	Nyeng ma ja yai	Gom ma thay
Who	Aii yo	Ga
What	Ja yo	Gaci
When	Arba	Nam
Where	Aucu ta say/ Aun	Gate
Why	Jai bu say/ Ato bu say	Gaci bey
How	Ato	Gade
Where are you from?	Yoe ah nga yo?	Chö 'ü: gate le mo?
I am from Bumthang.	Nga Bumthang do when.	Nga Bumthang le 'ing.
I am thirsty.	Nga ka kampa	Kha khom chi.
I am hungry.	Nga tog pai say sa.	Toh ke chi.
Morning	Nga si	Droba
Afternoon	Nyen cha	Nyin-che
Evening	So suitlas	Chiru
Night	San	Numo

Below are audio recordings of the following conversation:

Khempa:

1. REDIRECT [1] (<https://soundcloud.com/user-165950502/khempa-convo>)

Dzongkha:

1. REDIRECT [2] (<https://soundcloud.com/user-165950502/dzongkha-convo>)

English translation of the conversation:

Dorji: Hi, my name is Dorji.

Sonam: Hi, my name is Sonam. Where are you from?

Dorji: I'm from Zhemgang.

Sonam: What are you doing nowadays?

Dorji: I'm studying.

Sonam: I'm happy to meet you.

Dorji: I'm also happy to meet you. Let's meet again.

Sonam: Okay.

Numerical

Khengkha counting system is written in Dzongkha script but pronounced differently. Below is a comparison of Khengkha and Dzongkha numbers.

#	Khengkha		Dzongkha	
1	՚	Thak	՚	Ci:
2	՚	Zoom	՚	Nyi:
3	՚	Sum	՚	Sum
4	՚	Blay	՚	Zhi
5	՚	Ya-Nga	՚	Nga
6	՚	Grog	՚	Dru
7	՚	Ngee	՚	Dün
8	՚	Jat	՚	Gä
9	՚	Dogo	՚	Gu
10	՚	Choe	՚	Cutham
11	՚	Chowouray	՚	Cuci:
12	՚	Chowazone	՚	Cu-'nyi
13	՚	Chowasum	՚	Cusum
14	՚	Choebloy	՚	Cuzhi
15	՚	Choenga	՚	Ce-'nga
16	՚	Choegrok	՚	Cudru

17	ŋɯ	Choerngyee	ŋɯ	Cupdün
18	ŋχ	Cheorjat	ŋχ	Copgä
19	ŋp	Choedogo	ŋp	Cugu
20	χo	Nyeesho	χo	Khe Ci:/ Nyishu
30	χo	Khaidehichoe	χo	Sumchu
40	χo	Khaizone	χo	Zhipcu
50	χo	Khaizone Choe	χo	Ngapcu
60	χo	Khaisum	χo	Drupcu
70	χo	Khaisum ni Choe	χo	Düncu
80	χo	Khaiblay	χo	Gäpcu
90	χo	Khaiblay ni Choe	χo	Gupcu
100	χoo	Khai Nga	χoo	Cikja
200	χoo	Kai Choe	χoo	Nyija
300	χoo	Khai Choe Nga	χoo	Sumja
400	χoo	Nyeeshy Theg/Shipja	χoo	Zhipja
500	χoo	Ngabja	χoo	Ngapja
600	χoo	Drukja	χoo	Drupja
700	χoo	Dinja	χoo	Dünja
800	χoo	Nyeesho Zone/Gopja	χoo	Gäpja
900	χoo	Gupja	χoo	Gupja
1000	χooo	Thonthra Theg/Chigtong	χooo	Cikthong

Below are audio records of Khengkha and Dzongkha numbers being spoken.

Khengkha numbers: #REDIRECT [3] (<https://soundcloud.com/user-165950502/khengkha-numbers>)
Dzongkha numbers: #REDIRECT [4] (<https://soundcloud.com/user-165950502/numbers-dzongkha>)

Writing system

Khengkha is an oral language without its own written system. But it unofficially borrows from the Tibetan script and Uchen style of writing. Khengkha and Dzongkha numerical script are written the same.

Related languages

Historically, Kheng and its speakers have had close contact with speakers of the Kurtöp, Nupbi and Bumthang languages, nearby languages of central and eastern Bhutan, to the extent that they may be considered part of a wider collection of "Bumthang languages".^{[6][7][8]}

See also

- [Languages of Bhutan](#)
- [Kheng people](#)

References

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External links

- [Himalayan Languages Project](http://www.himalayanlanguages.org/) (<http://www.himalayanlanguages.org/>)

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